

**SUMMARY OF THE MEETING OF THE
HRPDC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE
June 6, 2019**

1. Summary of the May 2, 2019 Meeting of the Hampton Roads Regional Environmental Committee.

There were no comments on the May meeting summary.

2. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

3. New Stormwater Management Technique – Advanced Turf

Ms. Jill Sunderland provided information on a new stormwater management practice, advanced turf. It is a mesh-element reinforced natural grass root zone system capable of sustaining heavy vehicle loadings in occasional use applications. There is no visible infrastructure, while also resisting compaction and rutting and providing rapid surface drainage.

Committee members discussed some concerns with advanced turf, such as maintenance and mowing height; fire lane use versus paved surfaces; and saturation conditions given the climate in Hampton Roads.

4. Legal Policies and Challenges for Marsh Preservation

Ms. Elizabeth Andrews, Virginia Coastal Policy Center (VCPC) Director, gave a presentation to the Committee on some of the legal challenges in planning for marsh migration and wetlands preservation in the context of sea level rise. Addressing the conflict between protecting the built environment from flooding and preserving marshes and wetlands is one of the major challenges affecting coastal Virginia communities.

Ms. Andrews noted the challenges of planning ahead given today's needs and other considerations. This is further complicated by multiple sets of sea level rise predictive data and legal issues such as boundary line and regulatory shifts; potential locality liability; and the limitations of the legal framework in Virginia. Ms. Andrews discussed options to plan ahead, such as:

- Drafting comprehensive plans that take future flooding into account
- Zoning ordinances with incentives
- Buyouts/conservation easements
- Better use of living shorelines on long stretches of coastline
- Regional solutions
- Adaptation, mitigation, and managed retreat
- Additional funding for various programs

These options would help manage the dual goals of sea level rise resilience and water quality protection while also meeting stormwater requirements and mitigating damage from any future natural disasters. Last, Ms. Andrews shared results from a survey on how the Virginia Shoreline Resiliency Fund should be structured. Committee members discussed how marsh migration began; involvement of the insurance community; mapping unbuilt areas; and the Shoreline Resiliency Fund.

5. Port of Virginia Environmental Projects

Mr. Scott Whitehurst, Director of Environmental Policy and Compliance at the Port of Virginia, presented highlights of the Port's projects that benefit local waterways, reduce emissions from port operations, and protect its terminals from sea level rise. The Port of Virginia recently released its 2018 Sustainability Report, which includes a summary of environmental improvement and resiliency initiatives over the last year.

Mr. Whitehurst discussed several projects including the 55' Deepening Project; the Virginia International Gateway Phase 2 Expansion; the Norfolk International Terminals (NIT) Optimization; the NIT CRY Expansion; and the VIP BUILD. These projects serve to increase capacity, expand operations, reduce dependence on diesel equipment, and lower emissions by reducing idling. Various mitigation activities at Craney Island were also discussed, such as sediment remediation, wetlands creation, oyster reef construction. The Port is commissioning studies to ensure resiliency in future and existing infrastructure. Last, it has several programs such as its EMS program, low-emission efforts, and "Green Operator" to ensure environmental stewardship across its operations.

6. Hampton Roads Region – Norfolk and Virginia Beach Joint Land Use Study

Mr. Ben McFarlane, HRPDC, presented the process and recommendations from the Norfolk and Virginia Beach Joint Land Use Study (JLUS). This collaborative planning effort between the U.S. Navy, Norfolk, Virginia Beach, and the HRPDC offers strategies localities can implement to mitigate the impacts of chronic flooding and sea level rise on military operations and readiness. The study is currently out for public comment and is available for download at <https://www.hrpdcva.gov/departments/joint-land-use-studies/norfolk-va-beach-joint-land-use-study/>.

Mr. McFarlane discussed background on the Study, the JLUS process, and scenarios and vulnerabilities specific to installations in Norfolk and Virginia Beach. These included maps which show access with tidal flooding and sea level rise. In his presentation of recommendations from the Study, he shared strategies for regional coordination.

7. Other Matters

There were no other matters.

The next meeting of the Regional Environmental Committee will be held in Chesapeake on August 1, 2019.